

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-9. (canceled)

10. (New) A flexible footwear traction system oriented in a normal plane comprising a lightweight forefoot region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes; a lightweight heel region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes, the heel region including a heel piece on which the bottom of the wearer's heel would be placed, a heel support foldably mounted to the heel piece and being movable to and from a generally vertical orientation extending upwardly and outwardly from the heel piece to support the wearer's heel during use and to and from a generally horizontal orientation folded toward the heel piece for compactness during non-use; a flexible linkage made of a springy material between the forefoot region and the heel region that allows the forefoot region and the heel region to be readily flexed relative to each other at least 20 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system; and a strap or harness attachment adapted to secure the traction system to flexible footwear.

11. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 10 wherein the heel support comprises a pair of heel bales each of which has an inward projection extending through a respective opening in the heel piece for permitting the heel bales to pivot.

12. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 11 wherein each of the heel bales terminates in an inturned end which comprises the inward projection, and the openings in the heel piece being slots to permit sliding movement of the inturned ends in the slots.

13. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 12 wherein the heel bales are rotatable to a stop position at the vertical orientation which is at an angle of 95° - 110° from the plane of the heel piece.

14. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 10 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region are made of plastic.

15. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 10 wherein the traction system has a weight of 0.7 pounds or less per foot unit.

16. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 10 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 45 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

17. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 10 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 90 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

18. (New) A flexible footwear traction system oriented in a normal plane comprising a lightweight forefoot region constructed

of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes, all the spikes at the forefoot region being generally perpendicular to the forefoot region; a lightweight heel region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes; a flexible linkage made of a springy material between the forefoot region and the heel region that allows the forefoot region and the heel

region to be readily flexed relative to each other at least 20 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system; and a strap or harness attachment adapted to secure the traction system to flexible footwear.

19. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the spikes at the heel region are generally perpendicular to the heel region.

20. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region are made of plastic.

21. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the traction system has a weight of 0.7 pounds or less per foot unit.

22. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 45 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

23. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 90 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

24. (New) A flexible footwear traction system oriented in a normal plane comprising a lightweight forefoot region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes; a lightweight heel region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes; a flexible linkage made of a springy material between the forefoot region and the heel region that allows the forefoot region and the heel region to be readily flexed relative to each other at least 20 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system, the flexible linkage being a multilayer extender bar wherein the layers are mounted together while allowing relative movement between the individual layers; and a strap or harness attachment adapted to secure the traction system to flexible footwear.

25. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region are made of plastic.

26. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the traction system has a weight of 0.7 pounds or less per foot unit.

27. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex

relative to each other at least 45 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

28. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 90 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.